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622 villagers a certain, not very marked, respect, which may be increased by such factors as kinship ties between him and them, and his personal qualities.

621 Nor is the village itself clearly defined as a social unit. It does not possess any corporate rights over fishing and hunting sites, or control access to firewood gathering. A man may hold land in two villages. It is rarely that a village acts or is treated as a unit. The two main occasions on which the village is thus 'represented' are at marriages and in the context of the catechetical school. The party which goes from the bridegroom's [628] village to the bride's represents her village, to the other village; at the wedding feast food is given out on large basket plates, one for each village represented among the guests.

797 The role of the catechetical school as representative of the village as a whole will be discussed in another chapter; here it should be noted that the ceremonial reception of visiting missionaries by the 'school people' of the village has been evidently copied to some extent from the welcome given to the bridegroom's party, and this has in turn copied certain features from the welcoming of missionaries—notably the use of speeches in Portuguese.

361 The hamlets[20] and isolated households do not indicate a modernizing 'individualistic' trend away from village life, since 'conservative' and 'progressive' people are to be found in both units of residence. The Ovimbundu, whether educated or illiterate, when talking about themselves (particularly in comparison with the Kimbundu of Northern Angola) emphasize that they are a village-dwelling people, and for them the real values of village life seem to be the sociability and mutual help that a man living among his kin can enjoy. By settling in a village one indicates where the pull of kinship ties is strongest rather than any particular allegiance to the village headman.

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[20] I use this term for a settlement with less than four households.

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maize from these beds is for home consumption, and it comes at a time when maize supplies are running low, and some people have to rely on manioc. The *ombanda* type is sown in September and early October. Then the main fields (*ovapya*, plural of *epya*) are sown in October and November, and only after this is maize sown in the gardens round the houses. In December and January the people are busy hoeing the fields and in February the sowing of beans takes place, continuing into March. This is followed by the harvesting of the gardens in the village, and by the gathering of the maize in the fields, the maize then being placed in field huts to dry. This takes place in March and April, and with its ending the dry season has come.

The dry season is the time for travelling to see relatives and for getting married, since the burden of work is much reduced. May is a good time to clear the bush and then and in later months there is time to build houses. During the dry season there was much more chance of finding people at home, and there were far more festive occasions. This is also a time when men and women can practise crafts such as basketry, fish-trap making, pottery, and so on. In July, the maize dried in the field hut is pounded and brought back to the village, whence it is taken to the traders for sale. The pounding and carrying is often the work of parties of friends and relatives who are rewarded with beer. Occasionally somebody's maize is collected like this well into September, but most people finish in August.

By August the grass has grown very high, and the firing of it is the beginning of large-scale hunts in which men and boys from several villages may join together. Hunts may be undertaken by individuals or by groups at other times of the year either as a hobby or to kill a destructive wild pig (in which case the hunt will be undertaken by a group of people). September is a good month for fishing. The fire has cleared the stream valleys which can now be sown, thus starting off the year's cycle again.

There is no shortage of land, and hence questions of land rights seldom come up in social relations. A village headman has no rights over land outside his village, and even within a village there are strips of bush from which a new garden can be cut. Land is very occasionally sold. For instance a man return-

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607 have a kinsman's obligation to lend money in case of need if he has it, and it is said that one should only work very occasionally with a brother-in-law. When I asked which a woman preferred, her husband or her brother, men told me that she liked both equally, and the fact that a man and his wife's brother often live close together confirms that there is relatively little for them to quarrel over. A woman does not establish close ties with any of her affines. Formerly, when a man died 587 leaving a widow (and according to some informants a small child) a patrilateral cross-cousin of his might marry her. My informants, however, denied that a sororate had existed even in the past.[87]

605 Cross-cousins are the relatives with whom solidarity is most strongly felt. When I asked about the relationship between full siblings I was told 'They like each other just as cross-cousins do.' Now that it is no longer customary for agnatic kin to live together, it is often said that it is good to live near cross-cousins.

608 Formerly funeral friendship (*ukwatjisoko*) was part of an alliance between sub-chiefdoms, which were not contiguous. Nowadays, since people move about the country, funeral friendships may be regarded as another category of kinship—when one asks a man his relationship with somebody else this may be given. There is a tendency to regard *vakwatjisoko*, funeral friends, as being a sort of cross-cousins since both per- [764] form funeral services. This survival of funeral friendship, as a tie between individuals and as a haphazard means of supplying undertakers, exists in Gumba. In Ndjandju, which is the sub-chiefdom in which the Missão Católica de Bimbe is built, the *tjisoko* relationship is now established between two neighbouring [628] villages and is apparently the normal means of performing burials, and the permitted theft of small livestock regularly takes place.

606 Between parents-in-law and children-in-law the relation was and is one of restraint. This is most marked in the relations between in-laws of opposite sex, and least between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

[87] See Albino Alves under (*o*)*mingasu*, for evidence of a sororate in some Umbundu areas.